

LIGHT ON THE SITUATION IN CHINA.

On Sunday evening last ex-Secretary Foster spoke to the people of Watertown, in the First Church, of which his son-in-law, the Rev. Allen M. Dulles, is pastor. This was a rare occasion to hear a last and an authoritative word from China. Contrary to a very common notion Gen. Foster gave us to understand that the prejudice against missionaries and foreigners is not from the people but their would-be leaders, "the literati, the prospective office-holders and the ruling classes." These "bigoted and conceited" persons, who are in love with the established order as sacred from its great antiquity, are prime movers in all the riots sprung upon the missionaries as promoters of a new civilization. This inside view of the Chinese trouble is not only valuable as a guide to the Christian sentiment in England and America, but is also a very clear indication of the points upon which punishment shall fall. The mandarins and governors are chiefly responsible for these outbreaks. They in the meantime wish the world to believe that the ignorant and fanatical populace have broken out spontaneously in the attempt to extirpate foreigners and the new religion. And when requisition is made for the offenders, some obscure tool of these great officials is made a scapegoat. Peking cannot control the riots so long as the real plotters are protected. To strike at them is to invite reprisals. The duty of Christian governments is therefore very clear. Putting all diplomacy aside, they should make no secret of the facts, and then see to it that the really guilty are punished.

The right to teach the Christian religion in China is guaranteed by treaty. The duty of governments to protect Christian teachers and to demand and secure the punishment of those who have done them violence is simply unquestionable. The other question here raised by the very significant letter and quotation of Dr. Dennis, has some limitations and there might be diversity of view, but Christian nations have assumed very uniformly the right to promulgate Christianity. The divine command: "Go, teach all nations!" has been held to be imperative, even when opposition has come from ruling powers. There seems to be no other course. It would be settled as a definite policy if Japan—as may possibly happen—should demand the withdrawal of our missionaries. Dr. Dennis writes:

Dear Evangelist: The periodical lunge at missions on the part of their detractors has been in full swing in some of the American and English papers during the past few weeks. A significant comment upon the spirit of this whole business is found in the fact that the recent martyrdoms in China have served, in this instance, as its text. We note, however, with satisfaction, that some of the most prominent and influential journals in their editorial columns have taken strong positions in advocacy of the cause of missions and of the justice due to the missionary. The London Times is a notable instance, while the Spectator of London, in an editorial on the recent massacre in China, published August 17th, speaks with great fairness and discrimination, and in a tone of decision as follows:

It must next be asked whether when the missionaries go to China they ought to be as fully protected as other citizens doing their lawful business. It might, perhaps, be arguable that missionaries in China could not claim the protection of England, supposing they were breaking the law of the land by teaching Christianity. Personally, we hold that there is a good deal to be said for the opinion that they should be protected even in that case, or, in other words, that no Christian State should recognize the right of a

semi-civilized Power to exclude the entry of Christianity.

It is not, however, in the present case necessary to discuss this problem. The legal right of the missionaries to live in China and to teach Christianity, is absolutely clear, and is guaranteed by treaty. The men and women who were burned and speared the other day, had done nothing contrary to the law, or for which they could have been lawfully punished by any Chinese tribunal. This being the case, we hold it to be mischievous nonsense to talk as if the Chinese missions did not deserve protection. Are men and women to lose their British citizenship because in obedience to the voice of duty, and in order to carry out what they believe to be the will of God, they devote their lives to rescuing human beings from that appalling mixture of materialism and superstition which in China passes for religion? Is a man to have the English shield over him only as long as he buys tea and sells cotton, and is the teaching of, and ministering to, the degraded people of Southern China to be held as depriving an Englishman of his claim to be unmolested in a foreign country as long as he conducts himself in accordance with the law?

If this were to be the rule, the consequence might, indeed, be curious. We should have questions asked in Parliament as to why nothing had been done in regard to the flaying alive of Mr. Brown, a Scotch tea broker, answered by the remark: "It appears that Mr. Brown had been in the habit of teaching in the Sunday-school of a Presbyterian mission near the place where he was killed, and therefore the British Government could not be expected to interfere." The truth is, the attempt to say that the Government ought not to bother about missionaries is absurd. Unless we are going to give up the idea that British citizenship is a full protection to all to whom it attaches, we must protect men whether they preach or teach, or only buy and sell.

These are words of wisdom and dignified statesmanship. It is an open question, as the Spectator suggests, whether any human government has the right to prohibit Christianity to its subjects, or whether any civilized Christian Power is justified in recognizing such a defiance of the principle of religious liberty. If Christianity uses only persuasive means and is in strict obedience to existing laws, who can command it to silence and call upon Christendom to submit to the decree? God has given His Word to humanity, and all attempts on the part of human authority, either civil or religious, to suppress it and prohibit men its use, is usurpation. To be sure, each one has a right to judge for himself in the exercise of his own individual liberty, but who has any right to claim, even in the name of government, the authority to forbid Christianity to others? The whole subject is suggestive and timely at the present moment.

Yours most sincerely,
JAMES S. DENNIS.
NORFOLK, CONN., Sept. 7, 1895.

The Sanitary Era speaks very sharply of the scandal-mongering by one or two city coroners, citing recent instances of uncommon flagrancy, and concluding in these words: "The only business of a coroner is to ascertain the mode of death and by whom inflicted, in order that evidence of crime, if such exist, may be presented to the proper authorities and any probable criminal be detained for prosecution. Unless they point to a criminal cause of death, private motives, antecedents, and circumstances in such a case are as sacred from official intrusion and public exposure as those of any individual in the community; and since we are liable under our political conditions to have persons of no discretion with the powers of coroners turned loose upon the bodies of the dead, it should be made a high misdemeanor officially or otherwise to desecrate any one's person and reputation in the manner of Coroners Messer and O'Meagher. Better still, as the new constitution of this State allows, the perverted and degraded office should be abolished by the Legislature at the first opportunity."

A PICTURE.

By Charles Lemuel Thompson, D.D.

Red burned the evening's eye across
The lake, burned red and warm,
While o'er it dark and heavy hung
The eyelids of a storm.

Above the russet eastern woods
A ragged cloud hung low,
Where glowed in fair prismatic light
The segment of a bow.

Only a segment, for the sun
With a dash of arrows bright,
Smote on the cloud and turned its edge
Of gloom to yellow light.

I could have wished the cloud unlit
That o'er its shadowed breast
The rainbow full might have been drawn,
As the sun went down the west.

And could I wish God's promise bow
Had ampler scope and form,
Its curve complete, though it required
An ampler breadth of storm?

FACE TO FACE.

By Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler.

There is nothing in the New Testament about Committees or Conventions. Our blessed Master organized no Church; He founded a spiritual "kingdom." While He sometimes addressed companies of people—as in the Sermon on the Mount—yet a large portion of His biography, as given by the four evangelists, is occupied by His personal interviews. He came *face to face* with the Samaritan woman at the well, with the young ruler, with blind Bartimeus, and with Nicodemus in the private room by night. To Jesus Christ a single soul was a great audience, and it ought to be so regarded by every faithful minister or Christian worker. The Master once took a certain person "out of the town" when He wished to deal with him alone; and there are many cases now in which any third person would be only "in the way."

The record of the Apostles is also very largely the record of face to face labors for the conversion or the spiritual edification of individuals. Those early Christians were men and women who understood their personal responsibility and the power of personal effort. We do not read of the appointment of a single committee or the organization of any Boards. Seven men were indeed delegated to the work of dispensing charities to the poor in order to release the others for personal labors in preaching the Word of life. We hear very little about machinery of any kind. Nothing was allowed to keep man from man—the individual believer from the individual sinner. The Holy Spirit sends Peter off to visit Cornelius; Philip is directed to go and talk with the Ethiopian treasurer; Paul has a wonderful conversation with an anxious inquirer in the Phillippian prison; Aquila and Priscilla have a great Bible class in the person of the eloquent Apollos; and Dorcas is a "sewing society" in herself.

In these days we appoint committees, hold conventions, and organize societies. They seem to be indispensable, and there are many great purposes that can only be accomplished in that way. But is there not a danger of divided responsibility when it comes to the great business of *saving souls*? Is not the individual too often swallowed up in the society or in the church? Good people often talk about the need of having their church revived, and yet do very little to revive themselves. Christ commands His disciples now as much as He ever did, to let their lights shine in the world; but is there not danger that each Christian may forget that he or she is the bearer of a lamp? And if that lamp be well filled with grace and its light be lovingly thrown on one sinner's path, more good will

be accomplished than by a whole torch-light procession out on parade. Immortal souls do not go to heaven or hell by regiments; they go one by one, and they must be saved one by one. The process of saving is also, to a great degree, an individual process. In battle it is said that only about one bullet out of a hundred brings down a man. A powerful and pungent sermon may be heard by a thousand people, and yet only half a dozen souls may be brought under conviction of sin; and those souls must be dealt with *face to face* by the pastor or some other intelligent spiritual guide. Mr. Moody has often said that his most effective work is done in the inquiry room, when he gets into what the Scotchman called "close grups" with an awakened sinner.

When I look back over my own ministerial experience, I see now that a large part of the soul converting work was done by personal conversation. For example, I met lately with a veteran Christian who has been for nearly forty years a zealous member of the Church, and I recalled to him the evening on which I had made him a pastoral visit. On that evening a long talk with him had not produced much impression; but before I left he took me up into the nursery to see his rosy children in their cribs. As we stood looking at the sleeping little cherubs, I said to him, "My friend, what sort of a father are you going to be to these children? Are you going to lead them towards heaven or—the other way?" That arrow lodged; it was blest by the Holy Spirit to his conversion. At our next communion season he was at the Master's table. Preaching to him in his pew had not brought him to a decision; the preaching he needed was *face to face*. If pastors will go among their people, they will discover that there is an unbolted door in almost everybody's heart if we ask the Holy Spirit to show us where to find it.

What is true of pastors is equally true of parents and Sabbath-school teachers, and of all genuine working Christians—if we are on the watch for opportunities. Sometimes a loving letter is blessed to the conversion of a soul. A personal kindness in time of trouble, or a personal visit of sympathy, often opens the door of a heart to the Master. The apples that are now being gathered for the winter must be "hand-picked" if they would keep. In like manner must souls be gathered for Christ; each one sought out, prayed for and labored with face to face. That church will have the best harvest this year which has the most Christians in it who love to do *personal work* for Jesus Christ.

Professor M. B. Riddle writes of "Helpful Preaching" in the last Banner, giving this bit of actual experience—probably his own: "The most helpful sermons, experience has proven, are those that have been written with some special case in mind. The preacher, knowing the wants of one particular hearer, has aimed to meet the doubts or temptations, griefs or cares of that one; and the result has usually been that many others were helped. For there is a curious similarity in the spiritual needs of Christians, especially those of the same temperament. A young preacher was invited to preach in one of the large churches in New York. He expected to have among his hearers one good woman with whose religious life he was well acquainted. Accordingly he prepared a sermon for her needs, as he apprehended them. It happened that she was detained that day from the service; but the young man, for many years afterwards, heard of the profit derived by others from that discourse." No sermon with aim and uplift in it fails to do good.